

REMARKS

The Amendments

Claims 6, 14 and 15 are amended in the recitation of the amounts of the organopolysiloxane and the silicone resin in the liquid silicone rubber composition. As a result, the silicone resin is no longer an optional component. Support for the amendment can be found at page 12, lines 23-28, of the specification, for example.

To the extent that the amendments avoid the prior art or for other reasons related to patentability, competitors are warned that the amendments are not intended to and do not limit the scope of equivalents which may be asserted on subject matter outside the literal scope of any patented claims but not anticipated or rendered obvious by the prior art or otherwise unpatentable to applicants. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuing and/or divisional applications directed to any subject matter disclosed in the application which has been canceled by any of the above amendments.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

The various rejections of all the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over Boneberger (U.S. Patent No. 5,894,002) in view of Schueller (U.S. Patent No. 6,143,412) and Gibson (U.S. Patent No. 5,093,067), optionally further in view of Hayashi (U.S. Patent No. 4,995,799), Tensor (U.S. Patent No. 5,885,514), Nakamura (U.S. Patent No. 5,112,512), or combinations thereof, are respectfully traversed.

Initially, it is pointed out that the effective 35 U.S.C. §102(e) prior art date of the newly relied upon Scheuller reference is February 10, 1997. This is after applicants' claimed priority date of September 25, 1996. Applicants submitted a verified translation of their priority document to perfect the claim to priority during the prosecution of the parent

application.

Regardless of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the current claims are patentably distinct from the combined teachings of the cited prior art.

The basis for rejection appears to be that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the materials of Schueller to form the mold of Boneberger and that such combination would result in the mother mold according to the claimed invention. However, neither Schueller nor any of the other prior art combined with it suggest a material such as used for the mother mold of any of the instant claims.

First, Schueller only discloses the use of polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) molds. The generally accepted meaning of polydimethylsiloxane is an organopolysiloxane in which the organic groups are all methyl groups. This would correspond to applicants' formulae (1) or (2) only if all the R groups were methyl. But all the R groups are not methyl in applicants' organopolysiloxane component; compare the definitions of R^1 and R^2 in applicants' claims and the definitions of "b" and "d" which do not include 0. Schueller fails to disclose or suggest fabrication of a mold which contains an organopolysiloxane as defined in the instant claims.

Second, Schueller fails to disclose or suggest fabrication of a mold which contains at least 10% by weight of a silicone resin. Compare the amended definitions of the amounts of the (A) and (B) or (C) and (D) components in the instant claims. There is no teaching at all regarding a silicone resin component.

The other references of cited in the rejections fail to make up for the absence of such teachings or suggestions in Schueller. None of the other references teach or suggest a material useful for making a mother mold and none of the references suggest modification of the Schueller materials in manner which would suggest modifying Schueller to make up for

the above-discussed distinctions from applicants' liquid silicone rubber composition for making the mother molds.


The combined teachings of the prior art, considered as a whole, fail to teach or suggest the liquid silicone rubber compositions of the claimed invention or that a mother mold useful for obtaining replicas can or would be desired to be prepared from such liquid silicone rubber compositions. Further, there is no recognition from the prior art of molds that would be useful for photo-curing of photo-curable liquid resin filled in applicants' molds by light irradiation from outside the mold. It is only by applicants' invention is this simple and advantageous method recognized. Thus, the invention demonstrates an advance in the art deserving of patent protection.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that none of the instant claims are obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art under 35 U.S.C. §103 and, thus, the several 35 U.S.C. §103 rejections should be withdrawn.

It is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. However, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned to discuss any unresolved matters.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,


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